



Municipal Compliance Fact Sheet

Wastewater

What You Should Know About this Issue:

Municipalities that operate sewer systems and wastewater treatment plants are subject to the Massachusetts Clean Water Act. As a senior municipal official representing the interests of your community, it is essential that you understand the regulations to ensure that your community's wastewater system is operating effectively and properly protecting public health and the environment.

Examples of Municipal Facilities & Activities Involved:

Your community has invested significant funds in sewer collection systems, and these assets need to be operated and maintained so that wastewater receives proper treatment before being discharged. Activities you should consider include:

- Implement an infiltration and inflow program to identify and remove sources of clean water such as roof leaders, sump pumps, and storm drains, thereby preserving sewer pipe capacity to handle primarily sewage.
- Regularly inspect and clean collection systems to identify and prevent potential problems before they occur.
- Regularly inspect pump stations to ensure pumps, alarms, and emergency power sources are operating properly.
- For more detailed information on preventive maintenance programs, see: www.mass.gov/dep/water/laws/omrguide.pdf
- Implement a program to manage the discharge of fats, oil, and grease (FOG) to the sewer system to make sure they are removed at the source to prevent problems downstream (like raw sewage overflows). Adopt a FOG ordinance and regularly inspect facilities that generate grease, such as restaurants, to make sure the owners are operating and maintaining their grease traps properly.

Wastewater Treatment Facilities treat wastewater prior to discharge in accordance with either a groundwater or surface water discharge permit. Some facts you should know about the permits and how MassDEP administers them:

- MassDEP regularly inspects facilities to make sure they are adequately staffed, operated, and maintained. Ask us for the results of our last inspection of your facilities.
- The permit requires frequent sampling and monitoring of the discharge to make sure the effluent complies with the permit's conditions.
- The operator of your facilities must submit the sampling and monitoring results to MassDEP. These results become public records.
- Regularly maintaining these facilities, which include pump and lift stations and upgrading or replacing them when appropriate will increase their reliability.

Common Compliance Issues:

Sometimes, severe weather, vandalism, inadequate capacity, or improper maintenance or operation can cause raw sewage to discharge directly into receiving waters. These discharges, called sanitary sewer overflows (SSO), are a serious public health and environmental problem because they expose people to viruses and pathogens, cause sewage to back up into basements, damage property and impair water quality. The Sewer System Regulations (314 CMR 7.04(3)) require communities to notify MassDEP within 24 hours after an SSO has occurred. Within five days of an SSO, communities must notify MassDEP as to what caused the overflow, what's been done to protect the public, and what measures have been taken to prevent an overflow



from occurring again. The forms you need to send in to MassDEP if an overflow occurs can be found at: www.mass.gov/dep/water/approvals/surffms.htm#sso

Environmental Stewardship Tips:

The limited capacity of the sewer systems is an issue for many communities. Cities and towns should consider the ability of the sewer system to handle additional discharges before permitting new connections. To optimize the limited capacity of the sewer system, municipalities should implement programs to reduce infiltration and inflow (I/I), conserve water, and promote wastewater reuse.

Technical Assistance, Outreach, Grants & Loans:

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) provides state-subsidized loans at 2% interest for terms up to 30 years. Municipalities can use these loans to plan and construct wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, including rehabilitation and retrofitting of existing facilities. Each year, MassDEP selects projects for funding based on a competitive procurement process. In 2008, MassDEP intends to award up to \$300 million to Massachusetts communities. For more information on the CWSRF, go to:

<http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/wastewat.htm>

Contacts at MassDEP for More Information:

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If you are not sure which regional office oversees your facility, go to

www.mass.gov/dep/about/region/findyour.htm

CWSRF

Steve McCurdy, MassDEP Boston, 617-292-5779.

For more information on wastewater or other topics, visit the MassDEP website at

www.mass.gov/dep, or contact your nearest regional office listed on the website.

Subscribe to the MassDEP e-newsletter at: www.mass.gov/dep/public/publications/enews.htm

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